

Five a Week Off

An Honest Man Relieved of Suspicion of Guilt

By ELI MOFFATT MILLEN

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The "credit man" laughed and drew his heavy chair closer into the circle. He glanced at his watch.

"I will just have time to give you one story. Then I must go," he said. "Most of you will remember the character killing publicity given several years ago to a man of the name of John Goode. He was a defaulter. You will recall, and he has never explained what became of his rich uncle, who disappeared as off the face of the earth."

"John Goode had not been with our concern long when the din broke loose. He had been there long enough, however, to become a friend of the treasurer."

"The treasurer of our entire system is a woman. They say it takes a woman to read the small type on a man's soul."

"John Goode came along—I have forgotten now in what capacity at first, but he got along. He was a soft spoken individual when he did speak. There was an open faced directness about him. The heads of the firm liked him, but he did not throw himself much in their way. He did not draw down a very heavy envelope and had a wife and three children to keep out of that. I used to wonder how he managed it, for he did not have the look of a man in want. He was always neatly dressed. I saw his family with him one evening, and they were neatly dressed."

"Soft spoken, did I say? Yes, allowing for certain provocations. There was one subject, whenever it was mentioned, that brought him to emphatic words. He never hesitated to state that he believed a man's word should be his bond, whether there were other ironclad agreements or not."

"Somehow I could not help wondering a bit how far he would go with his theories. I found out. "One day I overheard him ask one of the boys for \$5 till the next pay day. He was refused for the sufficient reason that the other fellow did not have it, but he was told that the treasurer at times advanced a little if she was satisfied with her character reading."

"Goode went to the treasurer. He got the five, which, of course, was to be deducted from his next envelope. That was the small part of it."

"He stood by the treasurer's desk for half an hour after he had asked for the five. The two got acquainted, and the treasurer, so I was told, smiled when he left her as if she had been honored by the visit."

"One day, when Goode had been with us about a year, I went into the treasurer's office to get her opinion about one of our former boys who had gone into business for himself. She gave her opinion quickly and began to talk about 'our boys.'"

"And don't you think we have got a model in Mr. Goode?" she asked. "Oh, I don't know!" I answered.

"I let him have a good deal of money this morning—that is, for the sal-

"I paused. "But-but," Miss Susie stammered. I let him have more than that. I advanced him \$100. I—"

"Where-you?" whistled Mr. Merrick. "Isn't that taking a good deal in your own hands, Miss Susie? We have given you authority to help the boys with limited amounts, if you think they are worthy, but I am afraid you have done it to a brown this time."

"He ran his hand through his hair meditatively."

"Oh, well, never mind!" he added kindly. "I don't know that you have bungled so badly. I believe he will not take advantage of it."

"Goode did not call for his week's advance the president had so kindly offered. He left the office at noon."

"Goode had been gone three days when the papers told a story about detectives from another city up the state looking for a defaulting bank cashier in our city."

"His name was John Goode."

"He had been gone a year. His shortage and absconding had been covered up by the bank officials all that time, mainly that they might hunt him down on the quiet. A bungling detective had let it out."

"Miss Susie would not hear of giving a hint of our knowledge of Goode to the detectives. Mr. Merrick was called in. Miss Susie convinced him that not a word should go out from us."

"We can do our own investigating when his week's vacation is up," she said. "I am satisfied to wait till then. He will come back."

"He will be back," declared Miss Susie confidently. "If he does not I will take my medicine. Not until."

"That afternoon detectives found a Mrs. John Goode, who had just taken rooms in a cheap hotel far downtown. She confessed that Goode had left her several days before. She did not know where he had gone. He had married her only the month previous."

"Two days later, the day before John Goode's vacation was up, the papers found an entirely new story that interested the city."

"A rich old bachelor who had lived alone was missing. His house was locked up. It was recalled by the neighbors that he had not been seen for more than a week. They had heard him say that he had only one relative and that relative was a man without a home. The old man had never before gone away."

"Had some mishap befallen him?" "In the search for the old fellow his house and its contents were gone over. A copy of his will was found in his old drop lid walnut desk."

"A clause in the will contained the name of John Goode."

"John Goode, according to the clause, was a nephew. He was cut off from participating in the estate. The old man evidently distrusted him."

"A little old safe had been pried open, and an empty canvas money bag lay in front of it. It was easy to surmise what had happened to the old man. You recall the case."

"The detectives took a trail a week old, but declared that it was still a hot one."

"Miss Susie still refused to let me offer our information, which, strange to relate, had not leaked out."

"You are hindering justice! You are in contempt of law! You are an accessory after the fact!" I told her.

"Tomorrow night, if John Goode has not returned, you may go ahead," she answered. "If you wait you may be glad."

"One of the first things I had to do the next morning was to go into Miss Susie's office on another matter. As I finished my business with Miss Susie she looked me squarely in the eye and smiled sympathetically."

"Don't you worry so much over that Goode affair," she said. "I am not worrying. I somehow have a jocular feeling this morning that the fellow will be back at work before noon."

"As she finished speaking the door behind me opened. Miss Susie's face expanded and contracted and flushed with the most amazed expressions I ever beheld on a woman's countenance. Her eyes almost bulged. Before I could turn she clapped her hands once and with a cry, half of joy, half of unbelief, arose and then sat down again like one exhausted."

"The next instant John Goode stood at the desk, almost by my side. His face was browned and had a healthier glow than when he left. I sidled around the desk a step or two that I might look into his eyes."

"He leaned over Miss Susie's desk. He held a little scrap of paper in his hand."

"Miss Susie, you must have been absentminded when you gave me this, or was it a compliment to what you believe to be my honor? I found it wrapped up in the bills you gave me."

"Miss Susie looked at it, and her face flushed. She glanced quickly through a little file on her desk."

"I must have," she said. "I must have put it in by mistake. It is best to keep a little tangible memorandum, you know, Mr. Goode, even though it is not needed. I hadn't missed it. I thought it was here. Why?"

"She broke off in confusion. In the confusion she brushed the little scrap off of her desk with her hand. I picked it up for her, stealing a glance as I laid it back on the desk."

"It was a receipt given by Goode for the \$100. Under his signature he had scribbled hastily:

"Not more than five a week off."

"At that, Miss Susie looked up at him with a strange light in her eye."

"Out of your own mouth, Mr. Goode, tell me—do you deserve to be trusted that far?" she asked.

"Yes, and further if necessary," he answered steadily.

"I stood gaping like a Kentucky

mountain boy before the statue of Henry Clay."

"Miss Susie took up the scrap of paper and, with the tenderness of a mother when she gives her boy his father's cross of honor because she thinks he is ready for it, tucked it into John Goode's hand."

"Thank you," said Goode, as though he meant it. "I hope you will always trust me in this manner."

"I started to follow the fellow out. He did not go. Instead, he tucked the receipt in his vest pocket and pulled a roll of bills from his trousers pocket. He counted out \$150 and laid it on the desk before Miss Susie."

"I suppose Mr. Merrick told you that he expected me to have the salary for the week I was away?"

"Miss Susie could not answer for a moment."

"Didn't you need the money?" she managed finally to ask. "I thought you were going to need quite a while to pay it back?"

"I needed it very badly when I asked for it," said Goode. "I believed then that it would take me several months to pay it back. A little money has come my way during the week I have been absent, thanks to being able to gather it in. I do not need it now. I find that it is not a good thing, mentally, to let debts hang over."

"You had a restful time?" Miss Susie questioned in a faraway, conventional tone.

"Goode smiled wearily."

"Not very," said he. The worried look came into his eyes with renewed emphasis. "An uncle of mine, who died recently, left me a big farm up



"MISS SUSIE, YOU MUST HAVE BEEN ABSENTMINDED WHEN YOU GAVE ME THIS."

the state. I had to go up there; but, with the exception of the money I got from the trip, I have had a rather anguishing time of it."

"Miss Susie's face was blanched and drawn. I could tell that she was suffering as she pictured the cause of Goode's anguish."

"I sold a few hogs and a drove of sheep," Goode went on. "That helped quite a bit. I used to hope that my uncle would leave me the money he left to charity. Instead of the farm, but I am glad now that it was the farm."

"It will always be a sequestered retreat for me," he added cautiously, yet with certain boldness, it seemed to me, for a man in his box."

"I will not get to be with my family for some time, though," he went on wearily."

"What makes you think so?" Miss Susie asked."

"I cannot keep them here because," he paused and swallowed rather hard, "because my little girl has a bad lung. I did not know it till a few days before I left. It upset me so I have not slept. I feel better today. The doctor told me yesterday, before I left them, that she would come through with big lungs by keeping her up there. So you see they have got to stay there, and I have got to stay here—if the powers that be will let me."

"He turned to go."

"I thank you for the trust, Miss Susie," he said earnestly as he wheeled at the door and again faced her. "I have fully established a claim to your confidence?"

"Was it your child that took you, Mr. Goode? Miss Susie begged, with a choke in her voice. Instead of answering him."

"What do you mean, Miss Susie? Goode managed to ask, his lips quivering. "Do you believe?"

"Do you deserve to keep her—your child? Miss Susie interrupted."

"Goode's eyes never wavered from hers. He was slow to answer."

"I do," he answered quietly."

"His eyes just then as they appeared to me held a brazen challenge."

"Miss Susie must have pierced them deeper than I."

"You are an honorable man," she smiled radiantly back at him. Then a tear came into her eye, and she turned her head."

"She was correct."

The "credit man" rose from his chair and took out his watch.

"But Goode is 'doing time,'" chorused the clubmen."

"Oh, that is another Goode! They caught him a few hours after our John Goode came back."

"Our Goode is our foreign representative now. If he called for a loan equal to half the value of the business he would come very near getting it."

"With his word for his bond too."

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Editorial Comment

Bryan butts, Wilson tuts.

Watchful waiting maketh woeful waiting.

Candidate Hughes doesn't talk like a tut-tut-tut.

Hughes is hammering and the Democrats are jammering.

The Wilson Administration stands for taxes, and more taxes.

The Hughes trail will be cold by the time the Democrats strike it.

As a party leader, would it be fair to refer to J. Ham Lewis as J. "Pork" Lewis?

Bryan says Mr. Hughes' talks aren't judicial. No. The people can understand 'em perfectly.

Can the folks on the Democratic band wagon continue to play by the President's notes?

Hughes says the country can't be saved by letting it drift. That's where he and W. Wilson differ.

Washington reports that a new apology has been sent to First Chief Carranza. Looks like a habit.

Mr. Bryan is mistaken when he says Hughes is "vitiollic." The candidate is merely applying the acid test.

A messenger of President Wilson found out that Colorado women were for the administration. No messenger, of course, can be blamed for making good.

Political opponents are beginning to find that why Mr. Hughes kept silence so long wasn't because he had lost his tongue.

Another encouraging feature about our new navy is that when it is completed, Mr. Daniels will not be Secretary of it.

Having discovered that the Democrats don't like what he is saying, Mr. Hughes doubtless is convinced that he is on the right track.

Mr. Gardner should not quote what Mr. Wilson said while president of Princeton. His utterances are outlawed by himself in seven days.

That man Hughes is causing the Democratic newspapers an endless amount of worry. Apparently they will never be satisfied until he turns the management of his campaign over to them.

Mr. Hughes' speeches are giving poor satisfaction to the Democratic press, which proves they are very good speeches, indeed.

Secretary Baker is developing an agility in changing his mind that must endear him to his discoverer.

Mr. Wilson's Administration must respect itself incompetent in one respect or the other. It either has appropriated for an unneeded navy or it has neglected a needed navy. It can select its fault to suit itself. In one respect or the other it must be wrong.

"I believe in efficiency in politics just as much as in anything else," says Mr. Hughes. Efficiency is an excellent watch-word, and its use in the campaign is merely a forerunner of its use in the White House when he gets there.

First they said that Hughes was an iceberg, now they are saying that he is a mud-slinger. He cannot possibly be both, and as a matter of fact, is neither. The Democrats must feel in a mighty bad way when they cry out "mud and treason."

Commissioners' Notice.

In the matter of the estate of Albert K. Giles, deceased.

We the undersigned, having been appointed by the Hon. Matthew Bush, Judge of Probate in and for the County of Shiawassee, State of Michigan, commissioners to receive, examine and adjust all claims and demands of all persons against said estate, do hereby give notice that we will meet at the Owosso Savings Bank, in the City of Owosso, in said County, on Tuesday the 5th day of November, A. D. 1916, and on Monday, the 8th day of January, A. D. 1917, at ten o'clock in the forenoon of each said day, for the purpose of receiving and adjusting all claims against said estate and that four months from the 5th day of September, A. D. 1916, are allowed to creditors to present their claims to said commissioners for adjustment and allowance.

Dated the 5th day of September, A. D. 1916.

A. D. WHIPPLE,
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Commissioners.

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Probate Order.
State of Michigan. The Probate Court for the County of Shiawassee.
At a session of the Probate Court for said County, held at the Probate office, in the City of Corunna, on the 6th day of September, in the year one thousand nine hundred and sixteen.
Present, Matthew Bush, Judge of Probate in the matter of the estate of Michael Cunningham, deceased.
The Administrator of said estate having rendered a supplemental account to this Court.
It is ordered, that the 2nd day of October next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, at said Probate office, be appointed for examining and allowing said account.
And it is further ordered, that a copy of this order be published three successive weeks, previous to the said day of hearing, in the Owosso Times, a newspaper printed and circulating in said County of Shiawassee.
MATTHEW BUSH,
Judge of Probate.
By CHARLES GALLOWAY,
Probate Register.

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"BUT-BUT," MISS SUSIE STAMMERED. "I LET HIM HAVE MORE THAN THAT."

ary he is getting," she said—and I am wondering if I ought to have done it. "Just here let me state for your enlightenment that Miss Susie was not a debutante. Her face was smooth and unwrinkled as a baby's, but her eyes were not coquettish. The silver was beginning to run its glistening streaks through her hair."

"A temptingly large amount? I asked to avoid putting a more direct question."

"One hundred and sixty-five dollars. He offered to tell me what for, but I told him I only cared to know that he would deal honorably with me. I am to take five a week off."

"And he gets fifteen a week, eh?" "I turned and walked out. Even with my back to her I could feel that she was watching me anxiously."

"At the door I met Mr. Merrick."

"Miss Susie," I heard him say, "give Mr. Goode a week's salary in advance if he calls. He asked for a week's vacation this morning, and as he has been doing such good work I told him to call and get his next week's salary in advance."